

REWRITE



The Magazine of Effective Writing

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WHAT DOES IT COST TO BE A WRITER?

This may sound like a strange question to many of you. Certainly, great majorities of writers all over the world seem to hold the opinion that anyone can write. And that if a man or woman or child chooses to become a free lance, he automatically must receive a respectful reading from all editors. Advice is frequently given writers that the way to write is to write. Many successful authors, everyone knows, like to give the impression that they did it all by themselves. They decided they wished to be writers, so they got themselves a typewriter and a ream of paper and the rest is history.

Actually, as every one of you writers who have come up the hard way can testify, it's been a long, winding road. There have usually been a lot of unexpected turns, some luck—both good and bad—and a deal of studying somewhere along the line. You have bought a stack of chips, a pile of practical experience. And you have paid the current price a writer never gets let off just because he's a writer. Sometimes fate deals him a sourvy hand by dropping a rich prize in his lap. He therefore, naturally thinks, "This racket is a pip; I can make a lot of dough and be admired free of charge." Then the wanton jade pulls the string and he falls flat on his face and has to learn to walk, just like everyone else. And it is harder to learn the older a guy gets.

No, there is a price ticket on every coat of many colors. And each man pays according to his purse, his inclination and character. He spends recklessly and is fleeced or buys conservatively and sometimes passes by bargains. As Shakespeare remarked: "There is a tide...which, taken at the flood, leads on to fortune"...We sometimes must be gamblers, but always we must pay the price of admission & also of one thing we can be sure, there are no golden or permanent passes.

The first down payment is time. You must be willing to devote as much time as the job requires. This leads us inevitably to a second installment: faithfulness. Writing never, or hardly ever, is an open-and-shut, yes or no proposition. You cannot cut the corners, although many do. It requires infinite pains and persistence, the triumph of character over seemingly inexhaustible obstacles and unending discouragement, the painful attention to small and often trivial details.

There is also the matter of energy and imagination, although the latter is often overestimated. It is the old story of the hare and the tortoise. But the writer does without question have to be strong in vitality, and able to project that feeling to others. Magnetism does enter into the picture though not nearly to the degree many writers, daydreamers and other idle speculators or critics would like to think. A writer, like the

actor, can be taught to be perfunctorily effective through technique. A ship can't sail without wind, but a crafty mariner can make the fast hull of a competitor appear mighty slow on occasion.

To get down to finances, writing can cost nothing, or it can represent a large investment. To illustrate what I mean, I sold the first feature article I ever wrote because I had a lot of enthusiasm and stumbled upon a controversial idea that happened to be timely. My father remarked that I had caught my fingers on a lifelong means of earning easy pocket money. Contrarily, when writers come to me and, with little or no experience, in an offhand way tell me they plan to write a novel, I mentally add up the investment, of time and money and experience, they have got to kick in. I know that some of them will be licked before they start. They simply don't have the working capital of writing ability and professional experience. But that isn't all.

The services of an honest critic, to keep them on the line of practical achievement, is likely to run into several hundred dollars. Their own time that they might be investing more profitably in other ways, may amount to much more. A businessman estimated to me recently that a serious non-fiction book that he'd spent four years, full time, on, has cost him about \$20,000 in "lost" income. Yet on the basis of his letters to me, I can easily imagine that it may not be worth a "lead nickel" to any editor. James T. Farrell's publisher has just released a news item in which it is stated that the first of the celebrated "Studs Lonigan" trilogy grossed less than \$600. The next two books were also "critical successes" that did not earn a return large enough to keep their author alive while doing them. It was only years later that they "caught on" and belatedly repaid him.

But there is another angle. Many writers, as some of you well know, waste time & money on dozens of "critic-agents" who require you to take their "courses" and fiddle-faddle with their illusory promises to dispose of your "salable" mss. This cost of being a writer comes high. Or there is the writer who once bitten, becomes twice gun-shy. I have known writers who are actually selling or on the point of doing so, who for various reasons have refrained from seeking professional counsel at the moment when it would have helped them to close a sale or increase the earnings from their writing materially. Very short-sighted, you will say. But perhaps it was because they felt they could not afford that particular cost of being a writer that specific moment. "There is a tide....which, taken at the flood"...

Finally, to be a good writer, you have to make the most of what you have—inside. You have to fill the pitcher to pour. Some folk aren't able, or willing, to pay the price.

REWRITE

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MAKE William E. Harris, KEEP
THE FREE Elva Ray Harris, AMERICA
WORLD STRONG Editors, CLEAN

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Over a hundred years ago, a noted English author said: "The Americans will perhaps lose their freedom when they begin fully to reap all the fruits of it; for the energy necessary to acquire freedom, and the ease that follows it, are almost incompatible."

The RURAL NEW YORKER

DEMOCRACY IS AN EXPANDING, GROWING THING

The signs have multiplied this spring that the American people are deeply disturbed over the widespread political corruption, and the mismanagement that has brought waste, inflation, confusion and disrepute at home and abroad for the Nation. It is not at all clear what the average voter intends to do about it. There is no certain mandate to either major party. There is no tangible evidence that the ordinary citizen is enthused by the leadership in either party. Indeed, there is some promise of a situation wherein both parties could quietly disintegrate and, over a period of years, break up and disappear, or being reshuffled, change character greatly.

The one transparent idea that has stirred the minds of common voters increasingly, is that in this, the greatest democracy in the world, the man in the street has very little say as to who shall run for president & how he shall be nominated. Perhaps the most salutary result of the presidential primaries, this year, has been to point out that presidential candidates are selected in as wild and disorganized a way as the chaotic minds of men could possibly devise. The election

of a president is a national responsibility, yet no two states manage it in the same way and for the most part hidden forces, powerful and sinister, even when directed to ostensibly high moral purposes, pull strings out of sight of ordinary men. It is not just a matter of political bosses working secretly in smoke-filled back rooms. Behind these are the men and organizations which finance the huge expenditures seemingly required to elect a man to the presidency of the United States.

Sen. Robert Taft may be the most upright, "Honest Bob" in the world. We have no doubt he is. But who has paid the bare expenses of his six months and more of wide criss-crossing the continent times without number? And why? Eisenhower. He has not been a candidate yet the expenses of his most active boosters have been enormous. Practically the identical thing could be said of almost every other candidate for high office. Perhaps costly campaigns of this kind are necessary, but it seems like almost an affront to decency, in the face of our platitudes about the democratic way of life, and suffering of those who have lost everything in the floods, war and those plagues that inevitably follow in the wake of war. What must these victims in their misery think of \$100 a plate dinners, as well as all the lesser wastes of political flim-flam?

EISENHOWER FACES AN IMPOSSIBLE TASK

We do not envy the soon-to-be "Mr." Eisenhower, or those who help him to prepare his first political utterance. It has got to be good. In fact, perfect. It may well be what history will record as one of, if not the, most dramatic utterances of all time. As writers we can fully appreciate the potential anticlimax to which his backers have built him up and as writers, we can appreciate the selling job he faces, and the strategy of looking good, which he must work out.

We fiction writers could scarcely develop a more difficult situation to wriggle out of. The guy is a hero; he has a wonderful personality. But all his life he has been under authority from above, and isolated from civilian problems. (The Services customarily refer to us as "outside".) Now he's got the biggest problems dumped in his lap and must talk intelligently about them. If he is elected, he must be able to work harmoniously with Congress. The job requiring more tact, humor & patience than any other in the world. Like a star in a play, about whom every member of the cast has talked incessantly all through the first act, he must now appear, take his curtain and then instantly dominate the stage in a way that will make everyone like him. A suspense situation has been built up, which has already begun to crack from being "held" too long. One failure and he is done. Every writer can learn from this exploitation. To cap it all, he's got to be "big" in every way.

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FUNDAMENTALS OF GOOD POETRY

By Elva Ray Harris

WE JUDGE A CONTEST

The Pennsylvania Poetry Society invited me to judge its annual contest again this year. I found it very interesting and rather hard to pick the rightful winners. Contests have a way of being difficult to judge because so much responsibility goes with awarding prizes and poems seldom lend themselves to comparison according to arbitrary measurements. I never like to take that responsibility alone, so I called in Bill. We arrived at our various decisions independently, and in both of the classifications we found that we agreed on which poem should have first place. And on second and third place we weren't so far apart that we could not discuss merits, and faults, and arrive at an agreement on those awards. But the honorable mentions were indeed difficult to place.

We have noticed in judging contests, that there is usually one outstanding ms. But after that it is a problem to choose. In this case the other poems were pretty even—they might almost have been written by the identical author. They lacked individual color, and character.

It seems to me that but for one or two exceptions contest poems are never as good as those written solely from a desire to share an experience with others. In other words, a poet who is called upon to fill a "special" spot or rise to a special occasion, doesn't usually bring forth her best. She fails, it seems, to generate that enthusiasm that affords immediacy and meaning to a poem.

But most of these pieces represented good college tries on the part of each author. I think the comment that most generally can be applied is that many of these poems appeared to lack memorability. You could read them and enjoy them, but you could also forget a good many of them overnight. There were exceptions, such as the poem about the burning over of a field in which you saw and felt a hasty withdrawal of wild life. The poet succeeded in spite of technical inefficiencies in projecting her own emotion, her own very intense feeling for the "wild things, running". I could not help contrasting this ms. with a published poem I recently read, by a prolific author, who has a command of technique and language. The poem read smoothly, even melodically all through its long length. But the author had very little to say, very little emotion to project. A good finger exercise, I call it, in technique. But nothing more.

The poem we gave first place to under the first classification was oddly enough written around a trite subject, the burial of a soldier. A subject over which many a poet I have read gets sentimentally melodramatic &

pulls out all the stops. The result is that he moves the more thoughtful reader only to contempt or disgust. But this poet failed to do this. In a classification that permitted any form and any theme, the poem was written with a simplicity that did not allow any sense of melodrama to creep in. Its simple wording also offset any objection to its ballad meter, which very easily could have become sing-songy, and could have projected a gay mood instead of the reverent one this poet succeeded in putting across.

Spring is still a popular subject with poets. There was a poem by that title, a gay, singing thing written in ballad meter which gave adequate expression to the mood we get into when the daffodils start blooming in a border and the little new leaves pop out on the lilac bushes. But it was merely a "list", and lists have to be something special in the way of imagery and beauty of expression, if they are to get by these days. They so often leave a reader with a feeling that the poem is unfinished, that the poet is preparing to say something important, but does not quite get around to it.

There was another "spring" poem, a humorous one written from the angle of the housewife who finds herself tied to broom & mop, and don't we all, just at the time, at the moment, she wants to be walking out through the pasture over the new green grass, and hiking into the woods with the kids and dogs, when a search for mayflowers is on. Bill was quite taken with this one and for a minute wanted to place it high in the list. But in spite of its vivid portrayal of the "real" side of a domestic phase of life, it wasn't too carefully done. Repetition is good, and necessary, but its effect is low if overdone, and this was the case with this piece of "light verse".

There are times when there is a lot to be said for brevity. One long poem about a country church started off beautifully for eight lines. Then it lapsed into wordiness. Those first eight lines (the first two stanzas) & a final one equally as good, would have put that poem into the running for a prize, instead of the honorable mention we gave it.

The second classification was limited; it was restricted to sonnets. It was in such a group more than the other that I had a feeling the contestants had written poems for a form and an occasion rather than from a necessity to express an idea, or to share the beautiful thought with a reader. These sonnets were in general competently written, but they lacked for the most part that spark that would have made them memorable. There was a poem about the passing of youth in which the poet was hopeful that she would find in old age something that would be just as satisfying as the "glory" of youth. It was a fairly good job.

The same could be said for the one depict-

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ing the birds in spring. A pretty good work-a-day piece, but it would not set the world on fire. Trite phrases pulled it down to the level of mediocrity: "soft liquid notes", & "with bated breath", and "he vanished in the blue".

A sonnet written from the point of view of a daisy was also a good piece of workmanship, reading smoothly and melodically. Another, about a hillside forest, did not follow meticulously the pattern of five-foot lines—two lines contained six feet and one only 4 feet. It was a noticeable defect.

One sonnet and one poem in the first classification went overboard with poetic patriotism. Patriotism is a glorious ideal, & we sympathize fully with the emotion the author felt, as well as her desire to share her love of country, including its problems and the soldiers defending it. But one has to be subtle in dealing with such subjects. It is a curious fact that the deeper our emotion, the more quietly we are apt to express it. It is usually the insincere demagogue, who indulges himself in violent emotion. And especially in writing verse, it is so easy to slip over the edge and to become "poetic" in one's flag-waving and propaganda. Just as, in the theater, there is a difference between drama and melodrama, so in verse there is a distinction between true poetry and "poetizing".

But there was one sonnet, the one that we placed first, which stepped out of this aggregation of competent, but not too inspired poems. It was about a flier who died too young. Now that is a familiar theme in this day and age. (Bill and I have read at least a couple of memorable poems on this subject. I recall that during the Second World War one in particular, written by a young aviator, achieved a wide public and was frequently reprinted.) Yet this sonnet achieved a character of its own. Its beautiful metaphor comparing the youth to a dragon-fly, was without doubt the factor that set it apart from the other poems in this contest.

And so once again out of a reading of this poem sprang the age-old paradox of the ever-present resurrection of ideas. The oldest idea is always young again in the hands of a master craftsman, or one merely gifted with enough imagination to reclothe the "eternal truths" in fresh garments. As you inject an enthusiasm into your writing, you "breathe" life into the poems that flow from your pen or typewriter.

Next Month is Poet's Workshop. The deadline for comments on last month's poem (and, please, do not forget to help your neighbor by including with your entry a helpful comment) is May 10th. This does not mean criticisms are not always welcome. Especially, may I add, from our more distant correspondents, against whom the element of time often runs unfavorably. All comments are for-

warded to the respective authors of poems. A great many of these have expressed appreciation of the time and thought lavished upon their brain children. But this effort never is wasted because a number of those commenting have also told us how much the help they have expended has increased their ability to spot similar defects in their own poems.

A NEW BOOK OF POEMS

TIME'S TRAVELLERS. Stanton A. Coblenz. The Wings Press. \$2.00. A series of long "poem-portraits" with a preface by Lord Dunsany. A feature is that the meter is largely held to iambic pentameter, but does not become monotonous. Mr. Coblenz has a good command of his means of expression. An enjoyable book of poetry that can be read for pleasure. There are no "puzzles" to be ferreted out laboriously.

A PRIZE CONTEST AND A QUESTION

In the first THOUGHT & ACTION prize "featurette" contest members of the WCS Family, interestingly enough, finished one, two and three! They were Don E. Larson, Mrs. Marjorie M. Flint, and B. Coursin Black. Good!

What to Do About a Slow Report. Frequently, we are queried concerning slow editorial reports by editors. Here is a typical example: "I sent a short article to — Magazine about a year ago. They wrote and suggested I lengthen it and change it to the first person, not guaranteeing a sale. I did this, sending the second one off in July, with the usual stamped envelop. I heard nothing more. Friends tell me not to inquire, that I will get it back if I do. Should I wait longer or send it some place else?"

My reaction to this situation is as follows. I have only the author's side of it. I have found in long experience that writers, unfortunately do not always keep very accurate records, or report their disagreements, fears, etc., as factually as they should. I would want to know for my own information exactly when these mss. were mailed.

I would also wish to know if the second ms. was accompanied by an explanatory note, recalling the circumstances under which it was being resubmitted. This magazine has a large organization and the circumstances could easily be overlooked.

But it seems to me that when a writer revizes on speculation, a fairly quick report is only common decency. Second, if I were an editor, I should hate to think that writers considered me such an ogre they dare not to write for fear I would be mad and send their mss. back without further consideration. The implications of that thought do not tend to create confidence or goodwill.

I have written to the editor in question.

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HOW'S YOUR BATTING AVERAGE?

The acceptances reported this month:

Stanley M. Kenney

Correspondence: N. E. HOMESTEAD.

Short Feature: FATE.

Articles: COMPANION OF ST. FRANCIS & ST. ANTHONY (2 poems, too), FAMILY DIGEST and The ROSARY, RURAL NEW YORKER.

Bessie H. Hartling

Poems: TINY TOYS, Bulletin of "National Association of Watch & Clock Collectors".

Anne Pendleton

Poems: WAR CRY, ANNALS OF ST. JOSEPH, & HIGHLIGHTS FOR CHILDREN (juvenile). Juvenile Story: BUILDERS, LITTLE LEARNERS, DEW DROPS.

Short Short: ANNALS OF ST. JOSEPH (one a reprint from MAGNIFICAT).

Column: Staten Island TRANSCRIPT.

Kathryn Wilson

Articles: STRAIGHT, POPULAR MECHANICS.

Grace L. Fitzsimmons

Article: SCHOOL ARTS.

Songs: The INSTRUCTOR, CHILDRENS ACTIVITIES.

Short Story: OUR DUMB ANIMALS.

Ruth Fitzsimmons

Article: PRACTICAL HOME ECONOMICS. (And several poems to unspecified markets.)

Josephine Jennings Smith

Article: BETTER HOMES & GARDENS.

Mary Taylor

Article: JUNIOR LIFE.

Stanley M. Kenney (More)

Article: The PARISH VISITOR.

Carrie Esther Hammill

Articles: GRADE TEACHER, OUR HOME.

Poem: AM. COURIER.

Lucile Coleman

Poem: THIS DAY.

NOTE: send in your news, small or large, & help us to double-check on late market news of interest to writers. Someone else's tips may help you to an acceptance, & vice versa.

PARTISAN REVIEW, William Phillips, Philip Rahv, 30 West 12th NYC 11, March-April issue, contained a provocative and sound article on "The Age of Criticism". Main thesis is that criticism is written for the literary few & acts as a stultifying agent on creative writing. The author, Randall Jarrell, Read it.

We are happy to report that Alice Margaret Huggins, American missionary and a member of the WCS Family, who remained behind the lines in Red China, was scheduled to arrive in San Francisco on April 30th. We wrote to the pier.

SOME SALT AND PEPPER

THE GLORY OF OUR WEST. Foreword, Joseph Henry Jackson, Doubleday & Co. \$2.95. Thirty-five well known authors have written statements of fact and commentary to go with the beautiful color-prints. These represent the cream of a collection originally distributed free by Standard Oil of Cal. (SOC gave a mere 37 million away to motorists in 1947!)

This book illustrates how a gimmick for a book can be discovered almost anywhere.

A lot of money (too much money, we think) is going to be spent on politics this year. Many writers have already been hired, others will be, to help put across the ideas, campaign slogans, and party or personal statements of belief. Most of the latter will go into the wastebasket as soon as the election is over. Nevertheless someone has to write, dramatize and project the issues. No matter how small a writer you are, there may prove to be a local angle or gimmick you can show to the politicians in your community. It is a great opportunity to gain some experience and (possibility) some money. At the very most insignificant level the election offers you a news-peg for all kinds of features. A contest & gamble, but bortops not required!

VINCENTIAN is reported overstocked. ST. JOSEPH'S told a writer it was well stocked, so far as legends of the Blessed Virgin are concerned. (Probably a hint for other magazines, too. Unless a ms. is unusual. Ed.)

Here are two comments received almost the same day re: NEW ENGLAND HOMESTEAD, 29 Northington St., Springfield 3, Mass.: "One market that never seems loaded is NEH. I send them many mss. and very few are returned"... "NEH is fair and above board in their dealings. They wrote me that they always looked up the worthiness of prospects before using articles or features. That of course causes a delay, but they sent their check and tear-sheets before the issues containing my contributions appeared." (NEH is listed in several market lists as a low pay on pub. market. Ed.) So we are glad to pass along such a recommendation.

Parents' Magazine, Gary Bolton, 52 Vanderbilt Ave., NYC 17, told a member of the WCS Family recently that mss. submitted to Parental Problems dep't. are "never considered 'dead'". We keep all of those which we think will be helpful to the reader and hope they will be able to reach publication as soon as possible. Those we cannot use are discarded. As you will note in the magazine, it states that no entries to Parental Problems will be returned. If a problem is published, the author receives a letter stating so & a check."

Unusual Idea. The Lexington (Ky.) LEADER, a daily, has been running an editorial feature titled, "Prayer for Today". You do not know what editors will buy until you try to sell them! Have a good idea & selling plan.

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A NEW MAGAZINE AND NEWS

TWELVE/FIFTEEN, J. Emerson Ford, 810 Broadway, Nashville 2, Tenn. "Our new story paper magazine which replaces BOYS TODAY & GIRLS TODAY, will continue to use much of the same material now carried in the two separate papers. We will still use both serials & short stories; feature articles, occasional poetry, photo features, and certain special departments.

"Some of the material will be solicited for preparation according to specific requirements, but we will still use a considerable quantity of unsolicited mss. At present, we don't contemplate any basic differences in the nature of the material. While the paper is to be co-educational, it is natural that some of the features will be slanted predominantly to boys and other features to girls. We will attempt to keep a balance between the two, and we hope that much of the material will be equally attractive to both boys and girls.

"TWELVE/FIFTEEN will appear in a 12-page, 9x12 inches format. In layout it will have the characteristics of a magazine. We aren't prepared to indicate rates of pay. We make the rate as liberal as possible, but it varies, according to the type and quality of material purchased. We think that all of the values of BOYS TODAY and GIRLS TODAY will be preserved in the new periodical, and that also in many ways it will represent improvement."

NOTE: this is of course a publication the Methodist Board of Education puts out. Mss. bought by it are often syndicated to Sunday school papers published by other Protestant church organizations. Mr. Ford is editor of youth publications for the Methodist board, editorial division. TWELVE/FIFTEEN will begin publication in October. This is a REWRITE Exclusive. We appreciate Mr. Ford's kindness in answering our request for information.

Pleasant Custom. George F. Booth, editor & publisher of the Worcester (Mass.) TELEGRAM has established a custom that other newspapers might well adopt. Every year, he invites the 40 or 50 book reviewers who contribute, from time to time, to his paper, to a party at which they meet an author and talk shop.

Important Books Coming Up. In September, the "Revised Standard Version" of the Bible. Scholars working for 16 years under the authorization of the National Council, of the Churches of Christ in the U.S.A., have made a new translation based upon new discoveries and using the living language we use today, yet retaining the beauty of the "King James Version". Available in three editions.

"Television for the Writer" is a new book by Gilbert Seides and published by Doubleday & Co. (August 21st). Seides was for 8 years, head of the CBS TV program dept. He has produced about 1,500 hours of TV shows. These books available from the WRITERS' BOOK CLUB.

SUGGESTION FOR EDITORS

Editors, particularly among the so-called Little magazines and smaller secondaries, I believe would be smart to adopt one or more of the following suggestions.

Tearsheets. All contributors of any ms. of any importance should be regularly supplied with a copy of the issue in which their material appears. Or at the very least a galley proof or tearsheet. I am aware of possible labor & expense. But in the long run, this courtesy would pay for itself in goodwill and satisfied authors, who would advertise the publication.

Low Cost Copies. Supplementing this policy should be another, offering contributors over and beyond their free copy, a low rate on additional copies. Most authors would be glad to have additional copies for files or to send to friends. These would give the editor longer press runs, which would mean an increase in advertising rates and generally a lower per unit printing charge. In other words, these copies would pay for themselves and at the same time advertise the book.

Contributors' Postcards. Most of the "big slicks" give their contributors attractively printed postcards that need only be signed & addressed. Smaller magazines could use a permanent card that could be filled in as to the author & title. That sells copies!

ST. ANTHONY'S MONTHLY (See: April REWRITE) which is overstocked, has apparently informed those writers who have previously sold to it, that they will be notified when the editor, Fr. William J. Philipps, is again in the market.

NATURE, Richard W. Westwood, 1214 16th St. N.W., Washington 6, D. C., which often says it's overstocked, prefers short verses. Recently, Mr. Westwood told a member of the WCS Family that what little of "longer" material he buys is "mostly purchased in the fall and early winter" and that he "seldom buys" new things before the two months "summer vacation". Good illustrations help to sell poetry here.

The UPPER ROOM, J. Manning Potts, 1906 Grand Ave., Nashville 4, Tenn., widely used devotional guide, issues a list of topics which may be obtained by writers as a kind of directional range-finder. It is prepared from time to time.

The UNITY School of Christianity, Lee's Summit, Mo., issues a handy little folder, 8 pages, summarizing editorial policy & needs of its 8 publications. GOOD BUSINESS, YOU & ME WISDOM are the ones most open to a free lance writer.

"Things We Need", FARM JOURNAL, Phila. 5, offered (April) to pay for brief 3-line suggestions on important ideas & gadgets.

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PRO AND CONS ABOUT AGENTS

An agent recently sent me some correspondence he had had with a writer. In the first letter the writer "offered" a novel for possible sale. In the second the agent analyzed the ms. and with great charitableness explained to the writer why he could not take it, since in his estimation it was not saleable. In the third the writer roundly abused the agent. "I gave the ms. to you to sell not to criticize." (The agent had charged—nothing for his time in writing the letter. I marvelled at his gentleness because I had heard him take apart stupid writers without style many times. And always, there wasn't enough left of the writer to sweep up with a vacuum cleaner!) As a final clincher, nonetheless, the writer picked up a tiny slip in good usage that the agent had made. But if I were going to have the ms. criticized, "was his sharp comment, "I would have it done by someone who can write English." He added in a carefully deliberate aside, that his fear that the agent would not recognize literary values was fully justified and upon it there had accumulated a strengthening of his further suspicion that the agent did not know how to sell either.

Obviously, this was the masterpiece of one of those "cranks" one meets up with in every profession. The agent dismissed it as such. It is true, however, that many writers save face too often. They allow disappointment to make fools of them, and substitute emotional instability in place of sound objective, realistic appraisal of the facts. The thing to do is not to waste time with incompetent critic-agents, but also, when you find a real agent, accept his judgment unless you can refute as objectively as he offers it. No one can sell bad writing. The quicker you learn to recognize it when you see it and do something about improving your product, the quicker you will be on your way. In today's competitive market no writer can afford to offer anything but the best darned copy which he is capable of composing.

Now for the other side of the coin. Much too frequently we have to straighten out an agent-writer relationship that should never be allowed to deteriorate. Too many agents, I find, hold material indefinitely and fail to report even with a memorandum of what is being done. If I were an agent, I would see every one of my clients get a brief memo at least once a year. If my circumstances permitted, I would make these reports more often. Except in cases of serious illness, or other and professional hazards, a "silence" of 18 months or two years is inexcusable. I believe that the active client-accounts clear up themselves. It is the case of an off-trail book of shorter ms. that the agent believes in but can't make any editor accept, that is most often the root of the trouble. In such an instance, an agent would do well to have his secretary clip a red file-marker to it. Every so often a brief memo could be mailed

out. Writers are notably over-anxious. They like to be petted and shown some attention. A 3-line note instead of that abysmal, never-ending silence, would turn them into excited, rooting-tooting publicity agents for "my agent". It's a wonder so many agents do not discover this simple facet of human nature.

HOW A DEPARTMENT IS HANDLED

Here is an unusually frank and honest account of how a feature filler department is handled. It was sent to one of our readers, in answer to a query.

LIVING For Young Homemakers, Betty K. Weiss, 575 Madison Ave., NYC 22, re: The FILE BOX:

"Out of an average of 225 household hints sent in monthly, only about 6 or 7 are used. However, we may keep a FILE BOX hint that's especially good, for several months till we are able to use it. Also, space requirements of the magazine sometimes mean cutting this column at the last moment to make room for a special feature or something of more immediate interest to our readers.

"Therefore, it can be as long as five, or even six months from the date of your sending in a contribution to its publication. In cases of last minute deletion of hints from an issue, it means that those hints will be printed in the next one. Because of the large number of hints sent in, it is impossible to do more than acknowledge their receipt."

NOTE: this is one answer to the question, which is often raised, as to how long ought a writer to wait before re-submitting a ms. of this type elsewhere.

Another Angle. Nuriel Caswall, Household Editor, Boston Sunday POST, Boston, Mass., tells us she considers it perfectly ethical, and permissible, for a writer to sell identical recipes, etc., to non-competing newspapers. Her territory, for instance, is New England. She would not mind to see her copy re-appear outside of New England. In a West Coast paper.

What editors do object to is to receive a recipe copied out of some well known book, a famous COOKBOOK, and sent in to the editor—verbatim. They like even less well to have a dollar-chasing "writer" copy one of the editor's own recipes out of an old issue, then send it to snatch another prize! Incidentally, anyone who has worked with type for a long time, develops a sort of sixth sense—a vague photographic memory that recalls an item too closely imitated. You perhaps cannot remember the exact details, but you recall enough to be wary and check back. This should be remembered by any "writer" so base as to pick the bones of the dead past & try to pass them off as something new and fresh!

If you can't be creative, don't be a vulture.

REWRITE

SOME PRIZE CONTESTS NOW OPEN

Sachar Award Committee, Secretary, % Bnai B'rith Miller Foundation, 165 W. 46th St., NYC 36, offers \$500 and cooperation in publication of the winning ms. for a "significant unpublished, creative work of Jewish content". Closes: June 15, 1952. Last year the "escape clause" was exercised and no award, therefore, was given.

The Anonymity Workshop, Mr. G. M. Jackson, 32 Edgewood Ave., Mill Valley, Cal., will "pick at least 3 poems for awards of \$5 each from those (unpublished, original, any form, theme, etc.,) submitted to the Clerk by Sat., May 17, 1952. A report will be made to all writers send a return, self-addressed envelop. A contribution (stamps or coin) toward the expense of the activity will be welcome. Mss. should be submitted anonymously.

(The value of these, and other, awards of this kind was demonstrated by a correspondent, who stated that because she wrote a poem for an Anonymity Workshop contest (it didn't arrive in time), she made a sale to the SEP. Writers can often use a deadline to serve as a springboard for hitting some other market at a later date.)

KALEIDOGRAFF, Whitney Montgomery, 624 No. Vernon Ave., Dallas, Texas. (Zone 11). This is the month for submitting book mss. of poetry for the free publication contest. Current copy (25¢) contains entry blank. Contest closes May 31, 1952. (Annual Contest.)

Note: See other contests listed in the April issue of REWRITE.)

Shasta Publishers, 5525 Blackstone Ave., Chicago 37, Ill., offers \$4,000 and several lesser prizes for a Science-Fiction novel.

THE AMERICAN HOME ANALYZES ITSELF

The AMERICAN HOME, Marion M. Mayer, 444 Madison Ave., NYC 22, writes: "As most of the material about food in The AMERICAN HOME originates in our food dept., it has been necessary for Eleanor Lee Jones, food editor, to reject many food mss. submitted on speculation. At this time we have 4 regular 'food' features: 'Food America Loves Best', 'Good Victuals', 'Quickies', and 'Cheapies'. Therefore, we cannot use free lance text, but we are interested in good recipes that might be suitable under these headings. (For a large circulation national magazine these should, obviously be "exclusive", not rewrites taken from other magazines, newspapers, books, etc. Ed.)

"The food picture does not apply to other departments in our publication. Writers are invited to submit material on subjects pertaining to the home and home maintenance. Illustrated how-to-do-it articles are of special current interest. To save time & effort it is highly desirable for contributors before submitting to study the editorial scope."

ALONG THE MARKET FRONT

INTRC, Louis Brigante, Box 860, Grand Central Sta., NYC, announces a new series of 25¢ poetry & art pamphlets, "The Round Quarter" series of new poets and artists. It is designed to make available at a reasonably inexpensive price the "important work of new" poets and artists and to "promote the development and integration of the literary & pictorial arts in America."

Neatest Trick of the Week. The Post Office Department after installing zone numbers in various large cities and urging correspondents to use the numbers, has renumbered some of the zones in New York City. It also reorganized certain rural postal delivery areas, then postponed the changes, and finally put them into effect, according to reports submitted to us. Rather confusing.

Galub Publishing Co., 516 5th Ave., NYC... has just issued "The Editorial Directory", a 1952 directory of over 1,200 business, trade and professional publications. Each magazine is analyzed as to features, news and departments; deadlines, publication dates, names of editors, staff writers, etc., etc. It ought to be very useful to trade writers. Costs \$10.00.

Postcard Fizzle. The 10% surcharge on postcards purchased in quantities of 50 or more, has been repealed. That was one silly tax—that couldn't be enforced.

William Morrow & Co., Frances Phillips, 425 4th Ave., NYC 16, has bought a controlling interest in M. Barrows & Co., specialist in books of interest to homemakers. Bill's trade feature about the late Mary Barrows & her highly profitable firm was one of the original ones in a long series he did for the Publishers' WEEKLY. Since 1936 the firm has been under another management.

The Doubleday Syndicate, Mrs. C.A. Pollard, 575 Madison Ave., NYC 22, will now syndicate Doubleday books that are syndicated as serials. Doubleday editorial staff will edit under Mrs. Pollard's direction.

Julius Kushner, Kushner & Jacobs, 200 5th Ave., NYC (toy manufacturer) has bought control of the 124-year old publisher of toy & activity books, McLoughlin Brothers, Springfield, Mass. It is reported the new management intends to concentrate 3 special lines of popular books.

New Addresses: Franklin Watts, Inc. to 699 Madison Ave., NYC.

Richard Rosen Associates to 17 E. 22nd St., NYC.

The Almat Publishing Corp., 444 Madison Ave., NYC 22. It publishes Pyramid Books, a series of 25¢ books.

Keep your address records up to date.

REWRITE

SOME NEWS AND COMMENT

LIFETIME LIVING. Henriette Kish, 27 E. 39th St., NYC 18, is a new magazine scheduled to start May 7th, to help mature men and women in their "economic-psychological-medical adjustments to living the latter half of their lives. Good planning for retirement will be a major goal. We hope to inspire sound planning by giving examples of people who have retired successfully."

Articles about Occupations, Places, Part-time farming, Employment, Hobbies, Sports & Travel, Housing, Diet, Health, Fashions, new products, books, etc. for older people, are all desired. Length: 1,500 - 2,000 words, & 10¢ per word approximately on acc. 25¢ a copy and \$2.50 a year subscription.

Book Changes Publishers. The **WRITER, Inc.**, has taken over "How to Write a Novel," Manuel Komroff's excellent textbook. It is good reading for any fiction writer. I'm glad it will thus be kept in print. Costs \$3.50 and can be purchased through **WRITERS' BOOK CLUB.**

New Editor. Mrs. Eunice Stevens is now editor in chief of Blackiston Co., the medical publisher (affiliate of Doubleday & Co.) It is to be moved to NYC in the fall. Present address: 1012 Walnut, Phila. 5, Pa.

Hermitage House, Gorham Munson, 8 W. 13th St., NYC 11, has a new assistant editor, Michael B. Farano.

Misleading Title. "United Nations Poetry Journal", with a Baltimore address, doesn't have any connection with any official United Nations organization. On the contrary, it makes its appeal to writers on the basis of a membership protection against competition & an opportunity to obtain questionable "publicity" via a self-written biography & snapshot. If memory serves, the editor has been identified with similar vanity-type publications in the past.

League of Vermont Writers, Vera A. Perkins, sec., 242 So. Main St., Rutland, Vt., plans to hold its usual Summer Institute July 15-16 at Burlington. A pleasant opportunity to gather with other writers, talk shop & listen to some big names lecture.

A Note on Writers' Conferences. These summer affairs now come a dime a dozen. There are too many of them. It is possible for an author with sufficient funds to spend an entire summer talking about writing and cultivating his ego in front of other equally hungry egocentrics, staff and students included. Many of these conferences are mere publicity smokescreens designed to call attention to some school or locale.

There are good conferences, and teachers, but it requires hard work and patience, and good sense on your part to find them. Some of the older ones have lost that fine zest, the enthusiasm for exciting ideas and stim-

ulating discussion of craft problems. They have become formalized or, worse, a sounding board for big names, who reminisce lengthily about their own great days in the past... Empirical discussions of literary style and other abstractions also waste much time.

Remember that in the final analysis there is no escape from the necessary task of writing and learning to write. That is if you intend to be a writer instead of a celebrity. Seek out then, the men and women whose writing in their books, or in the writers' magazines leads you to believe they are practical and enthusiastic craftsmen, who will "give" out of their stored up experience generously rather than pose. You will make mistakes and waste some time. But if you persevere & track down only one man like Robert Frost or Henry Beston, or a woman like Katherine Forbes, you won't have thrown away your summer.

I well remember the sunny morning at Bread Loaf when I sat at the feet of Robert Frost and watched him finger the lives of a group of promising young poets. And the rainy afternoon at Durham when John Marquand, garbed like a well-to-do country squire, categorically stated his disbelief that writing can be taught, then talked candidly for an hour or more about practical writing as only he, one of the greatest living technicians in the business of using words efficiently and effectively, can. And that other afternoon when the late Capt. Achmed Abdullah, cocky, egotistical and a showman through and through, strutted before another Durham audience, yet gave us much to think about by the things he held back or didn't say. As G.P. Baker, head of the 47 Workshop at Harvard, once told me, "Sometimes you learn just as much, or more, from a bad production. Yes, you can learn a lot from both the positive and negative sides of the scale. And so, while no one in his right mind wants to, or should, waste time on the cheap and mendacious, don't forget that the sponge that absorbs knowledge, the spark that fires the love of learning, lies ever buried within you. Feed it well."

As regards conferences, we obviously don't know them all. But having spent time at some of them every summer for the past 17 years, and also having been around the literary scene for considerably more than that, I have acquired a small amount of perspective on the same. We also know how important it is for a good many writers to invest their time, and money to the best advantage. Therefore, we'll be glad to the best of our ability to advise any of our readers on summer plans.

Don't Let Discouragement Get You Down. Mr. L. R. Bateman, director of public relations for U. S. Steel, prefaced the Theater Guild on the Air production of "The Silver Whistle" recently by noting that it was the 12th play written by Robert E. McEnroe, eleven of which were failures. All were written while he sweat out his waiting period in a plane-factory. Even this one required much revising on the road before it clicked.

REWRITE

A CALL FOR CREATIVE LIVING!

The flood catastrophe in the heart of our great land is a disgrace and a challenge to our much touted American spirit of "initiative". In behalf of the thousands of American citizens who have been rendered homeless and destitute, REWRITE calls upon the politicians and the electric power industry, as well as all those having special interests, to stop feuding about the respective merits of government vs. private ownership. Let us apply statesmanship and American industrial know-how to the solving of a mighty natural problem. We can do it, if we all work together in harmony and with the determination which has made this nation respected the world over. The Missouri and Red rivers have gone on rampages before, and they will again. This is no new set of Providence; it is as old as the man-made conditions causing it. But it should have been cleaned up long since. If half the money that has been wasted on pork barrel appropriations, had been used to harness these powerful rivers, the men, women, and children who had to flee their cities & farms, would be still living in contentment at home. If the politicians who this year are spending millions to tell the world how essential they are, and the corporations that annually spend more millions lobbying to protect special interests, would devote only a part of this tremendous sum to getting really essential jobs done, America would become the paradise of earthly living that it easily could be. Let us stop wasting time, money and energy. Let's do something about all of the world's disaster spots. Let's do it now!

And let's not forget that catastrophes of the proportion of the Missouri and Red River floods, present the greatest challenge of all to writers—men of ideas. Not just to blow off steam, but to suggest creative living.

Light Verse

Miss McGinley used the title of her new volume as both title and symbol. The phrase was borrowed from the suburban real estate advertisements which always assure prospective buyers that the dwelling being advertised is, fortunately, only a short walk from the station. As symbol, it represented certain aspects of suburban life viewed by the poet with a not unjaundiced eye. Miss McGinley noted that she didn't mind in the least defending suburban life from the barbs of the novelists. She writes of "my own little world" in much of her light verse, Miss McGinley said, and suggested that Wordsworth did the same, although their media differ considerably. But both she and the Englishman, despite wide differences, write on the same materials—men, women, children and life. The use of light verse does not deprive the poet of the opportunity to provide the gentle but firm philosophical edge, and audience reaction to Miss McGinley's reading indicated not only recognition of incidents and personalities but of philosophical nuggets as well.

At a meeting of the Catholic Poetry Society of America recently, Phyllis McGinley read from her latest book of light verse, ("A Short Walk From The Station"). We think her comments tie with advice that is often offered to writers. It is always helpful to see how an author applies basic wisdom or eternal principles of writing.

The reporter, too, gives us a thought to think about.

A GOOD PROJECT TO SUPPORT

Here is something writers and their clubs could well get behind. According to Wallace J. Campbell, Washington director of the Co-operative League, 30 million rural and small town readers have no access to a public library. One out of five Americans! And out of 3,000 counties, about 1 out of 6 have no libraries of any kind. Another half of the counties are served only by libraries in cities and towns.

H.R. 5195, introduced by Rep. Boyd Tackett, Ark., would appropriate \$7.5 million annually for 5 years as a demonstration project to be matched equally by money from the States and with control resting in the latter, for the purpose of improving library service to these 30 million overlooked readers. At the end of the 5 years it is hoped that the individual States and local governments would carry on the service. In the Senate, a similar bill is being supported by Sens. Hill, Aiken and Douglas.

Think what this extension of library service would do for writers: REWRITE approves and urges writers to support actively such a measure that will benefit our national life in so many ways besides writing.

Garden City Books, a division of Doubleday & Co., the house of many imprints, has setup still another to handle its original, adult publications. John Kieran's "An Introduction to Wild Flowers" is the first title to be issued by "Hanover House".

We Notice that a number of "critic-agents" and a few of the smaller agents, have moved their business offices to home addresses. As we have observed many times, a good critic, obviously, can have his office almost where he desires it. We have found that straighter thinking can be done in the country away from the hurly-burly of city hub-bub.

But an agent, except for a few small ones who handle a limited stable of regular clients, must, of necessity, be in New York City, where the great bulk of the big pay markets are. That's why we believe that agents with addresses far from the metropolitan area write themselves right out of any serious consideration as "agents" who are inactive contact with the daily needs of quickly changing markets.

We at WCS, although not agents, manage to originate a lot of sales for writers because as editors of REWRITE we enjoy types of contacts not readily available to those specializing in teaching alone. And also because we work hard at maintaining the Central Mss. Markets File. Our reportorial experience has taught us to concentrate on fundamentals, & to analyze specific markets for individual & single mss. We do this from the writing angle. Agents do it from the merchandising or selling angle. Few persons combine both.

REWRITE

NEWS AT WCS HOUSE

Bill to Attend Phila. Regional Conference. Invited to lead the Slick Short Story Workshop, Bill, and possibly Elva, plans to attend the Fourth Annual Philadelphia Regional Writers' Conference at the Hotel Bellevue Stratford, June 11, 12, 13.

We have many writer friends in this area, and it is our hope that we can be as useful to as many writers there as we can. (We intend to interview as many editors as we can for authoritative reports on their editorial requirements.) Already several of our WCS Family have expressed a desire to confer on special individual projects. Bill wishes to be as available as possible during the Conference and outside as time permits. Elva's visit depends upon whether Billy 'Gee is in school at that time or not. After the Philadelphia visit we plan to spend a few days at Solebury School, New Hope, where Bill's college roommate, Robert W. Shaw, presides as a headmaster.

REWRITE will reach you a few days late again this month. The long series of colds & flu that has plagued us this winter, continued well into April. Poor Elva has been nearly worn out, but managed to get her judging of the poems in the Pennsylvania Poetry Society contests completed on time. (See P3.)

The spring season, however, came down upon us with a rush. We expect to taste our own asparagus tomorrow (Apr. 24th). Peach trees, some new English walnut trees, and a maple in the front yard, that Bill has set out, have begun to bulge with green buds.

Our two well-loved kitties having died of a throat infection, we have acquired a puppy, a small mountain of dog. Only ten months old, Major, a cross between a German shepherd and a St. Bernard, with a strain of collie, already can stand up on his hind feet taller than Elva. Exceedingly gentle, his affection for all of us is something, which one huge tail and gigantic tongue cannot adequately express. Billy 'Gee adores him.

The WRITER (London, Eng.) used as its April editorial, a hard hitting attack on editors who after ordering a ms., cut it down and then pay only for the reduced wordage.

Only a shade less "shameful", it seems to us, is the practice of operating similarly on mss., which are voluntarily submitted to an editor. Most editors, especially in the larger circulation books, pay for all wordage, used or not. But there is a minority that does not. We would like to have these reported to us

THIS CONCERNS FREEDOM OF THE PRESS

THE JUDGES AND THE JUDGES. Merle Miller. A Foreword by Robert E. Sherwood. Doubleday & Co. \$2.50. This is an important book. Upon its reception depends in part the future of free speech in this country. Whether it shall be real, or only given lip service. For it is the report by a former editor of YANK, & later novelist, prepared for the celebrated watch-dog of our liberties, the American Civil Liberties Union, and published by one of the largest publishers in the United States.

In a sense it is a reply to the book & newsletter, "Red Channels" & "Counterattack". In a larger sense it is re-affirmation of democratic principles in the face of blacklisting in radio and television. These were set off by the dismissal of Jean Muir from that radio perennial, "The Aldrich Family". More blacklistings quickly followed, simply on a suspicion that various persons in the amusement world might be, or were thought to be, Communists. This kind of ostracism based only on suspicion or accusation by others who adopt a "holier-than-thou" attitude, is very dangerous. It is standard practice in every Communist-controlled country. With a slight change in the political winds, it could just as easily be applied to members of the D.A.R. or A. F. of L., to Unitarians or Catholics, to Republicans or Prohibitionists. This report summarizes and explains a type of narrow "patriotism" that is alien to America & dangerous to writers. It is handled with dignity and without reference to the names that have been mired. It weighs both sides.

A FEW MARKET NOTES

The CHRISTIAN EDUCATION CO., Rev. Erwin J. Kolb, co-editor, 1222 Mulberry St., Highland, Ill., publishers of The CHRISTIAN PARENT and MY CHUM, (See: April REWRITE) states it pays \$5.00 per 1,000 words now, instead of \$2.50. This is a step in the right direction that other religious field might well follow.

Davis Contest, James Neill Northe, 318 N.E. 9th St., Oklahoma City, Okla., offers \$5.00 \$3.00 and \$2.00 for "best poems contributing to everyday living and in any form, free or rhymed. Send triplicate copies and pen-name. Open to U.S. or Canadian writers. Closes: July 1, 1952.

PermaBooks, Doubleday & Co., Garden City, N. Y. (Editorial offices: 575 Madison Ave., NYC 22). This is a new division in this great publishing firm. The general manager, Melvin Avana, and George de Kay, editor. The editor of Garden City Books is Juveniles, Laura Harris.

On Punctuation

Punctuation is designed as an aid to the reader, but some poets seem to forget that fact. Of course one can go to the other extreme. We wouldn't for instance, recommend using a comma after every single word. That was done you know, not long ago, and the book was actually published. Setting aside that comma-cal example, the fact remains that respect for the reader demands sufficient punctuation by the poet. William Faulkner may write sentences miles long and get away with it in his novels, but the poet who scorns punctuation only irritates his readers. Why damn the reader who finds a poem obscure for want of a comma or question mark at the right place, when the poet is at fault by damning the channels of communication? Many phrases are susceptible to more than one meaning when read in the context of a poem. Aversion to punctuation can hurt a poet more than he suspects.

Catholic Poetry Society of America. Ferris Mack;

REWRITE

THE ONE UNAVOIDABLE "FORMULA"

The other day I caught an AP Sunday video feature interview with Ed Sullivan, CBS' TV star m.c. of "Toast of the Town". The snap ending of the article, which had emphasized the value of human interest and the unusual little human touches, ran as follows:

"If the viewer of a TV program 'does not root for someone,' observed Ed Sullivan, 'you haven't got a show.'" (Worcester TELEGRAM).

(I thought immediately of all the hundreds of times I have pounded that same idea home to writers of short stories, novels, & feature articles of varied types. It is one of the inescapable universal principles that a writer must learn to recognize. Until it is instinctive with you to set up a "hero" and give him something important to do, or give him a difficult problem or obstacle to overcome, you are really not a professional. I wonder sometimes if that is not the biggest difference between the amateur and the professional writer. Of course there are other distinctions, but Ed Sullivan put his finger on a "must".)

Perhaps I was super-conscious of this always present weakness in the mss. of so many inexperienced writers, because I had hardly finished reading a short story in which the author had violated this principle very badly. Not only had the writer used an omniscient viewpoint, which makes it difficult for a reader to identify himself with any character because he is so detached from all of them, but also she had started with A, then switched to B, and finally ended up with C. In other words, she viewed the story as the author standing outside the story's circle, but at various times she slipped into the angle of each of the three characters. Thus, just when the reader believed it was A's story, B got between him and A; then C crowded B out of the way. Many writers will do this through a long succession of characters only to revert to the original MC at the end. But not this writer. She started with a wife and ended with the husband.

Every reader, every viewer in TV or radio the movies or the stage, wishes to identify himself with someone. As Ed Sullivan says so crisply, the spectator wants to get into an exciting story, even if it's only vicariously. We can only live a very small amount of experience in our own short lives. But when we watch a story, or drama, or even read an article, we identify ourselves with someone who is doing something. We relive for a moment a dramatic episode as if we were the MC. As if we were re-enacting that story in the immediate present, right here and now.

Sullivan threw in as an aside the thought that one night Gen. Jonathan Wainwright was in the audience of "Toast of the Town". When he was merely introduced, he got the largest applause ever received on the program. For

he was a hero and not one of those watching the program, in the studio or out, but during the War had lived via the newspapers the heroic defense of Corregidor. As Americans, as human beings everywhere, we could have a share in it and imagine how we would feel in those rock shelters, knowing that we were in for a shellacking.

The one unavoidable formula, if you wish to call it that, that every writer needs to use in every piece he writes, involves that MC, his Problem, and the relationship of readers to it, who desire to be taken out of "themselves" while they "root" for the MC. Trick therefore, is to make this pattern simple & crystal clear, so that the reader receives, and becomes a part of the drama. Theatrical people call it the art of projection. They have to reach out over the footlights & grab an audience, as the phrase is.

There are three phases to this. First, the formula itself. This is simplicity refined. You choose a Character; a likable, sympathetic character that the audience will go for. That is (1) in a series of five steps. (2) you face him with a Problem. It ought to be a simple problem in which the MC must choose this or this. He has just two alternatives. If he chooses one, he loses the other. (3) Develop the Conflict; test him. He wants to do one thing, but he ought to do the other. He tries to wriggle out of the noose, falls flat on his face. He gets up and cognizant, informed by his experience, he tries again. Again he falls on his face. But he has guts and determination. Character. He makes, and this is (4), a Decisive Action. It is do, or die. You can build the suspense up as thick as you want to and are able to. But it's the Decisive Action that tips the scales, leads to the satisfactory outcome. The hero earns his reward by his own efforts. (In the story I read there was no MC and the end just happened by chance.)

The second phase is to plane and polish—as a skilled carpenter would do. And remember that an expert carpenter does not force his materials into his design. He makes use of their natural characteristics. He brings out the natural beauty and character of the wood. In the same way, the writer thinks in terms of his characters, not an arbitrary & hackneyed plot. He selects, eliminates, and intensifies, and does it all by knowing his characters through and through. Most of us, you will agree, do not do enough of this.

Finally, there is the third phase. Having made your blueprint, and cut and built a story, you try to give it the sparkle of real, living people. You try to invest it with intimacy and warmth. You use action verbs, the dialogue that your people would speak, most of all you make the audience feel the spatter of chilling rain, the hot warmth of desert sun, or whatever the background is. You convey emotion by skilful selection and intensification, by intimate words.

REWRITE

REPORT ON PROSE WORKSHOP

There were a lot of criticisms of No. 8—Mrs. Hartling's transition, even though several persons question whether it was a true transition. (I am inclined to agree that it is not the commonest type.) One writer gave as her opinion that Colin's reaction was too fictional, too conventionally that of every character in fiction. Another writer thought the second sentence was too long and should be broken into several.

Mrs. Harold D. Reed (with whom a number of writers disagreed as to the importance of a check as a spur to writing) thinks the transition effective as a shift from one mood to another, and also because of its suspense & what it reveals about Colin. That's why we picked it. One of those who denied it as a true transition, Stanley M. Kenney pointed out it was dramatic, but otherwise didn't fulfill the requirements of a transition.

Mrs. E. R. Turcotte, a new comer, labelled two sentences as "feeble". ("Somebody was moving in the outer corridor", and "The outer door was opening slowly.") She says they are weak because neither of them "happen to Colin. The author is telling them to us, even though we see them through Colin." Good comment. Mr. Turcotte points out that, when Colin snaps off the light there must be light in the hall or he couldn't see the door opening. But if he saw a streak of yellow light on his desk, or a board creaked, it would be happening to Colin, and so to us.

More of these comments will be quoted and discussed next month. This is all for now.

Inexpensive Book Publishing. The Macmillan Co. plans a stiff paper covered edition for John Bell Clayton's first novel, "Six Angels at My Back" as one means of combatting high costs. He's published a lot of short stories

Teensters—send in your original short stories, poems, or drawings for this monthly feature. We'll pay \$2.50 for a short story, \$1 for a poem, and \$1 for a drawing. Send your contribution to Teen Talent, 1703 Chestnut Street, Philadelphia 3, Pa.

Campaign technique

• • • "No law compels [the audience] to listen to you. You must interest them; if you don't, a swing band, a news broadcast, another speaker will."

• • • "You are a guest in thousands of homes; do not raise your voice to your host."

• • • "Do you find yourself using big, hard-to-understand words? Forget them. Write naturally—as you converse."

• • • "Don't get lost in literary confusion. This is not an oration. You have no stage, no banners, no charts on the wall, no supporters to be seen; you have only your voice."

• • • "Keep your lips moist. (This avoids speaker's dry dust.) DO NOT COUGH OR SNEEZE INTO THE MICROPHONE. Avoid clearing your throat."

Except for the final injunction which is useful to writers required to speak in public, all of these instructions should be kept constantly, persistently in mind by writers.

They come from the booklet, "Is Your Hat in the Ring?" issued by the organization known as the National Association of Radio and Television Broadcasters.

CLOSING DATES ON PROSE WORKSHOPS

No. 10. A Feature Filler (500 words or less) Let us see what you think is a good filler. \$1 paid for all used. We hope those we don't use will sell elsewhere. Closes: May 10.

Question Box. Here's a chance to ask a question and have it answered in REWRITE, or in your self-addressed, stamped envelope. We're interested to help as many writers as possible. This is a regular Workshop. June 10.

No. 11. Suspense Problem. Project an atmosphere of suspense. For fiction or non-fiction. In 100 words. Closes: July 10.

No. 9, a dramatic scenario, proved beyond the reach of most of the numerous writers. I am therefore, holding the entries and scheduling the project again. This workshop will close Sept. 10. (There will be no workshops closing between July 10 and September 10, although I will be needing you to work on various projects.)

I will discuss dramatic scenarios in June issue of REWRITE. I shall try to comment on one or two of the present entries, and give you a clear idea of what constitutes a dramatic scenario. The failure of writers on this assignment shows why many writers fall in fiction.

HELP US TO HELP YOU

I want writers to use our Central Ms. Markets File. Every day we talk markets to one writer or another. Some of these are buying books, renewing their subscriptions, or are asking our counsel in regard to ms. Often, because of some chance remark or footnote to a letter, one of us volunteers a suggestion that may result in another ms. and possibly a sale.

Now we can't be bothered charging up each separate item of this kind, or sending some writer a bill. But it does take time and we have a living to earn. We originate a great many sales, yet we never pretend to be an agency. We don't charge commissions. We only charge our reading and counsel fees. Very few writers take advantage of this situation or ask us as editors questions that should, more properly, be asked of us as a writer's counsel. Human nature being what it is, some persons occasionally ask us long, involved, complex questions and do not even inclose a stamp. For the "full length" instructional letter we charge our minimum fee, & explain why.

It is the "in between" and very short inquiry that raises the problem of when we've got to be "mercenary". I repeat, we want all writers unhesitatingly to fire questions as to markets and selling problems whenever one arises. But we suggest you bear in mind we'd rather write you a letter and really settle a problem than skitter around it with postcards. And cryptic replies...So, enclose in your note a few stamps or small sum for the WGS Scholarship Fund. That way, you'll help us, and yourself and/or another writer, too.

REWRITE

TWO DEPARTMENT EDITORS EXPLAIN

FAMILY CIRCLE, Cecily Brownstone, Child-care Editor, 24 West 45th St., NYC 19, told one of our readers, "It doesn't seem feasible for us to put a time limit on contributions for the 'How Did You Handle It?' dept. because there are so many factors involved, in the choosing and using of them. Frankly, in the four years we have been running this department we have had only one or two letters similar to your own."

"In the box asking for contributions to the 'How Did You Handle It?' dept. we do state that: 'No contributions will be returned'... However, for your own information, we always return contributions accompanied by a stamped, self-addressed envelop that there is no chance of our using."

SUCCESSFUL FARMING, Carol Towers, Assistant Ed., Meredith Publishing Co., Des Moines 3, Iowa, wrote: "Each month we receive over 3,000 contributions to 'All Around the House'. Each ms. is carefully read & considered for publication. With such a large number arriving each month, I am sure you understand why we would not be able to notify each author."

"Your suggestion that a note could be added to the hint page is also impossible under our present arrangement. Because we work—5 months ahead of the calendar, that is, we're currently (March 27th) working on August material, many of the hints must be kept some times at least a year before they are timely. For example, each year at Christmas time we receive many hints for the holidays. They must be filed for 7 months and then if they are selected, will not appear in the magazine until a full year from the time they were submitted."

"As a general rule, if a hint is not used within 18 months from the time it was mailed in, you can usually assume that it's been discarded."

DO YOU WANT MORE FOREIGN SALES?

REWRITE is glad to join with the **PUBLISHERS' WEEKLY** in urging the passage of the so-called **Celler Bill**. Congressman Celler aims to bring our copyright law into agreement & coordination with the basic universal copyright convention proposed by United Nations through **UNESCO**. Our present law requires, it seems, that books in English (except those of American authors) shall be manufactured here in the U. S.

The effect of this is to handicap sales of American books abroad because we discriminate over here against the books of the other nations in refusing them copyright here. This puts us in the invidious class of non-democratic Russia, Red China & Argentina. It is a fact that everyone except the **Book Manufacturers' Institute** & **International Typographic Union** support the **Celler Bill**. Tell your congressmen you do, too, it's your bread!

NEWS IN THE MARKET PLACE

Closing the Ranks. Although **Ives Washburn** as one of the smaller book publishers is not being completely absorbed by **David McKay Inc.**, 225 Park Ave., NYC 17, sales and the detail functions have been combined. The editorial addresses (as above) are the same, too.

REWRITE has long advocated systematic industry-wide consolidation of the inescapable shipping, billing and accounting services a great number of New York publishers now duplicate at great individual expense. Think of the savings that could be made if a unified central bureau, maintained and staffed by member publishers, and using the efficient modern machines that are available, replaced the present waste of labor! Think also of the savings that could be made through unified, more aggressive sales crews, and a single, streamlined system of discounts instead of the present heterogeneous billings that booksellers have to wrestle with. The **WRITERS' BOOK CLUB** is not one of the largest outlets for books. But of the hundreds upon hundreds of invoices we receive, no two are alike. Each must be examined very carefully for individual differences.

If the book publishers ever get together, they could offer much greater competition to radio, movies, TV. They could afford to give authors better royalties and all around contracts. **REWRITE** is glad always to see basic consolidation of clerical forces. It regrets every loss of individual publishers & booksellers, whose tastes help to make the publishing industry the great and necessary outlet it is for ideas and the printed word. In a world as large and as exciting, as seething with progress in both ideas and ideals, there is always room for more writers and publishers possessed with imagination and persistent endurance.

Henry Holt & Co., 383 Madison Ave., NYC 17. (This is a new address, larger quarters.)

Possible National Center for Juvenile Literature. The Library of Congress has borrowed Mrs. Frances Clarke Sayers, Supt. of Work with Children, N. Y. Public Library, for an exhaustive study of the possibilities of creating a national center for the study & increased usefulness of children's literature. The project is being financed by a joint committee from the **Am. Association of University Women** and the **Association for Childhood Education International**. Many individuals, it is stated, are also cooperating. Obviously, this could be a fine thing for writers.

Incidentally, we are pleased, and honored, to have been recently added to the **New York Public Library's** list of magazine subscribers. It is a proof that **REWRITE** is recognized as an important tool in one of the great libraries of the world.

We hope our readers will urge other public libraries to subscribe. It helps us to help you.

REWRITE

REPORT FROM THE MARKET PLACE

ADULT LEADERSHIP, Adult Education Association, 743 N. Wabash Ave., Chicago, Ill., is a new magazine that started publication last month. A grant from the Ford Foundation made it possible. Top educators, writers and publishers served as consultants and spent one year preparing for it. The AEA is a not-for-profit organization.

"Each issue provides a kit leaders of group organizations, a problem clinic and a means by which readers participate while reading. They also plan the contents of future issues as they read. The first issue was completely devoted to program planning." Subsequent issues will deal with such group leadership problems as "How to be a Good Leader", "Selection and Use of Resources", "Being Effective in Your Community", "How to Be a Really Good Group Member", etc. Subscription is \$3.00 per year. Address as above.

The Am. Travel Association, % Travel Section, National Education, 1521 M St., N.W., Washington, D. C., is a new low-cost travel cooperative that has been formed by 8 national organizations including the NEA. It will work in harmony with similar organizations, already functioning in Europe. Other groups in this country in the farm, labor, religious and education fields are expected soon to participate as members. Sounds like something writers would find useful.

Best Seller. As of the middle of April it is estimated that 541,000 copies of the new revised standard version of the Holy Bible, not to be published till Sept. 30th, are on order! It comes in three editions.

REDBOOK, as of March 15th, began paying a nice little price of \$7,500 for its original novelettes and book condensations. The editorial slant now of the Magazine is toward the younger readers, an audience between 18 and 25. Bear this in mind when submitting a story of any length.

The **FREE PRESS**, Edwin P. Hoyt, Colorado Springs, Colo., is doing some interesting things under its new management. It is dropping syndicated reviews of books in favor of those by experts in the area. Mrs. Hoyt is also eager to exploit books by local authors. The paper probably will welcome features and news having local tie-ups.

Note for Washington, D.C. Readers. The **American Booksellers' Association** holds its annual convention at the Hotel Shoreham, May 25-28th this year. This is an excellent opportunity to be in contact with important editors. Chance to interview a few celebrities, too. Start thinking up the gimmicks now!

Henry Holt & Co. has given its files & also its ledgers for a period of almost 100 years to Princeton University. This collection of half a million letters, dating from 1866, is a potentially important research pile which writers may find worth digging into.

Robert Van Gelder, editor of **Crown Publishers**, has died.

A Way to Make Friends and Influence Editors. One of the easiest ways is to be alert to your opportunities to serve editors as eyes and ears. Whenever you see or hear some bit of news you think would interest an editor, or might be valuable to him, jot it down on your letterhead, or clip it and send it on. Most college public relations offices are so publicity conscious today, they mail a copy of every mention of a local girl or boy direct to the hometown paper, often including a picture. But many a newspaperman has memories of discovering the news and features, which fall through the sieve and do not get back to the hometown paper.

Or again, here is an example of how a feature article sometimes is built. The other day I was circularized by the **Boston Museum of Natural History**, which recently built an ideal new home on the Charles River dam and is consequently seeking new members. It is doing pioneer work in interesting children, and teaching them natural history. Because under one heading I have clipped several articles about unusual museums for children, I visualized immediately several features and recognized this museum as a source of copy. The director, **Bradford Washburn**, is a noted explorer. Since he is an expert on Alaska, a New England writer would find him an excellent source of copy whenever Alaska appears likely to break out on the front pages.

Many feature stories are lost over the dam merely because routine newspapermen are too busy, or don't remember another story, which if hitched to the news of their day, should make a nice feature. If you as a free lance preserve these clips that contain a pile of facts about some historic, possibly newsworthy place or person, you can add others & build a yarn.

Changes of Address

Another way that members can co-operate and make the Business Office happy, is to notify the Society promptly in case you change your address. We have harped on this theme many times, but the headache still remains. Won't you please bear this admonition in mind? It takes time, you know, to have new stencils cut (incidentally, it amounts to a considerable expense, too), and often an issue of the **BULLETIN** or **SPIRIT** is mailed out to the last known address and comes back to us again for remailing (more expense) and if the change in address is temporary, we may be months catching up with each other. This causes annoyance to you and it doesn't make us happy either.

We feel the same way!
It costs money, too.

In the course of a radio "interview" the night before the N. J. primary, Gov. Driscoll coined a thought that writers could apply to readers. "Voters," the Governor remarked, "prefer to be for someone rather than against someone else."

Did you ever read many yarns, in which the Villain is the MC? Once in a while as a novelty, a tour de force. But usually he's foil to the Hero.

That's something worth thinking about. Good strategy.

REWRITE

SOME PROS AND CONS IN THE FILLER FIELD

Scattered through this issue of REWRITE is an unusual number of reports from editors of special departments on how they handle mss. submitted usually under a "no mss. will be returned" basis. This is another REWRITE "Exclusive", for which we are grateful to Mrs. Evelyn Read, who has been querying editors, regarding the length of time a writer ought to wait before submitting the same ms. to another market. There are other aspects of the problem, as witnessed by the note from Muriel Caswall, Household Editor of the Sunday [Boston] POST. (See: P. 7.)

The biggest single problem, however, that writers of feature filler material face, and the commonest point of irritation they hold against editors, is this matter of mss. disappearing into a bottomless pit of complete silence. The letters speak for themselves, I think. Certainly they establish varying degrees of interest in the welfare of writers without whom there would be no magazines. I believe there is much to be said on each side of the subject. But surely those editors who do manage to return the "impossible" mss. to which their owners have attached return postage, are doing something to lessen the pain and frustrated bitterness of writers. We've received a number of surprised, and pleased, reports from writers who have had their mss. returned to them, sometimes even with a pencilled note scribbled across them. We know that the goodwill thus engendered, is a long run asset to any magazine. Those editors in the great majority of cases will not quickly be forgotten. And if a worthwhile longer ms. ultimately is developed, they will scan it first.

The other side of this thought is that an author who proves himself considerate, loyal and helpful, often attracts attention in even the busiest editorial offices. A sympathetic and watchful interest in him is as a consequence generated. Although it may be of no immediate importance, it will get his mss. a bit more careful reading. And if the promise that every editor would like to see develop, does blossom out, he will receive a friendlier welcome. It is well to recollect that human nature is mercurial and often unpredictable. The one thing you can be altogether sure of is that among both editors & writers there's bound to be both skunks and—swell guys and gals. With quite a few indeterminate "in betweeners" mixed in. You have to take them as you find them, and be rather charitable always! It takes extreme patience to be a big time professional writer or editor. You have to learn not to "blow your top" every time a check is not immediately & instantly received. You have to learn to negotiate. To rewrite and revise, to shape material to fit a special need. To study that strategy of handling which makes a ms. seem peculiarly, even thrillingly appropriate to the moment when it is presented. You have to appear casual and spontaneous under very de-

liberate and carefully planned circumstances. In other words, even a filler that requires perhaps a minute-and-a-half of a reader's attention and then is dismissed as "cute," becomes often a labored work of art. If these letters we have reprinted prove anything, it is that the highly competitive job of writing and editing a big circulation slick magazine today requires a lot more competency & executive handling than either side is generally willing to give it. We at REWRITE believe that the job is worth doing well, and that increased cooperation on both sides of the fence will result in greater efficiency and satisfaction all around. That's why the various letters have been printed. Our job is to help writers and editors to work more harmoniously together. So we welcome an opportunity to help both parties to better understand the problems, and the needs, of the other.

A FEW WORDS ON VIEWPOINT

An author asked us the other day if he is right in believing that it makes for greater vividness, if the reader sees the events of a story through the eyes of the MC. That is of course absolutely correct. It's a point we constantly try to labor in REWRITE. Not that every story must be told exclusively in the MC's viewpoint. Marquand's story of the general, discussed in this issue, is an effective example. Marquand uses an observing and participating character. Thus, we live that story through the feelings of a person, who not only participates, but has the necessary detachment to view the events with perspective.

It has been said that all there is to the job of writing is to make the reader see and hear and feel it as if he were there in person. Actually, there is much more to it than that. There is, also, the technical detail of setting up an effectively simplified line of interest that the reader can easily follow. And the equally important task of making it possible for the reader to identify himself with one character so well that he can live the experience vicariously as if it were his own, and as if it were taking place here and now before his very eyes. In other words, he is the MC. That does not mean that the reader has to be actually the MC, or limited to the latter's body. The story can be "about" the MC, as in Marquand's book. Or it can be told by an invisible observer watching this story unfold over the MC's shoulder. Reader can thus be subjectively in the mind of the MC, objective to the other characters, which means he can see and hear what they do & say and interpret from external signs what they think, but not go into their minds or actual feelings. And, most important of all, he can enjoy a partially omniscient viewpoint. He is not limited entirely to the MC's viewpoint, yet does not set up another viewpoint, within the story. (This is the most used and generally popular method in fiction!) He is in a word able to play God for a moment.